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SUBJECT: GOF WANTS TO IMPROVE NATO-EU COOPERATION

REF: STATE 20333

Classified By: Political M/C Josiah Rosenblatt, for reasons 1.4(b) and (d).

11. (C) On February 29, Political M/C met with Philippe Carre, A/S-equivalent for Strategic Affairs at the MFA, to discuss the demarche on improving NATO-EU cooperation (reftel). Carre was pleased to receive our message, because the current impasse has been both frustrating and worrisome for the GOF, which "wants to find a solution" before the French Presidency of the European Union (July to December). The GOF particularly regretted the recent inability to have an informal meeting on Kosovo on February 25. Carre referred to French efforts to address the problem, including the 4-point French proposal from last fall, saying that the lack of a functioning mechanism for NATO and the EU to talk is both "dangerous" and "stupid," particularly in the context of Afghanistan and Kosovo.

12. (C) Carre was under no illusion that the problems will be resolved quickly, stating that the base of the problem is Turkey's refusal to recognize and deal directly with Cyprus in a collective format -- a hard-line position that Carre affirmed is reinforced by the U.S. position of support. He acknowledged that the problem is further exacerbated by the Greek and Cypriot retaliatory position "taking hostage" Turkish participation in the European Defense Agency. He agreed with Political M/C that we needed to see small gestures on both sides to lower the profile of the dispute and reinforce practical benefits. Carre stated that France will reinforce its message to Greece and Cyprus that they must be "reasonable" and "generous;" however, France has much less influence with Turkey, due to President Sarkozy's well-known position against Turkish accession to the EU. Carre expressed hope that a positive declaration on NATO-EU could be possible at the NATO summit in Bucharest. Please visit Paris' Classified Website at: <http://www.state.sgov.gov/p/eur/paris/index.c> fm

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